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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

FRIDAY, APRIL 4, 2008

In Today's Papers

The Enigma of Europe's Terrorist List

All papers report on the European Court's decision to exclude the PKK from the EU's list of designated terrorist organizations. Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports that the European Court of Justice ruled on a case submitted by Osman Ocalan that appealed for the PKK's removal from the EU's terrorist list. The court decided the 2002 ruling, in which the PKK was added to the list of terrorist organizations, was wrong because, "the PKK organization was not given the right to defend itself." Papers report that the EU Council declared that the EU Court decision will not have any impact on the EU's list of terrorist organizations.

Mainstream Sabah says both the AKP and opposition parties reacted by saying that such decisions do not comply with the principles of fighting against terrorism. Far right Tercuman writes, "Turkey abides by all EU demands, but the EU took another step toward dismembering Turkey," and the paper called the ruling, "treacherous." Mainstream Aksam writes in its banner headline, "This is European Justice," and notes, "The PKK is removed from Europe's list of terror organizations." Mainstream Milliyet's headline reads, "Ankara is Shocked by the European Court of Justice's Ruling," but the article notes, "the ruling was only related to procedural flaws." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet calls the European terror list, "a mystery." However, Islamist-oriented Zaman notes, "The EU's Opposition Emerges to the Decision Against the European Court; The PKK is a Terrorist Organization," as EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn's spokesperson said, "the EU accepts that the PKK is a terrorist organization." Meanwhile, DTP Batman deputy Bengi Yildiz said, "this decision is a positive development; law should speak rather than guns."

Strong Messages from PM Erdogan to the EU

All papers: During his address to the Turkey-Sweden Business Forum in Stockholm, PM Erdogan called on the EU to be clear about Turkey's membership. Erdogan reiterated Turkey's determined efforts towards

EU reforms, but noted that Turkey's patience is not endless. Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak's banner headline carries Prime Minister Erdogan's message to the EU during his meetings in Sweden, "If You Will Not Take Us, Don't Delay Us," noting the PM said, "Turkey is tired of the EU saying 'but,' 'however,' and 'if.'" Yeni Safak and Zaman both carry Erdogan's statement, "We are really tired of this. If EU countries openly say they do not want us, we will be able to focus on solving our own problems."

NATO Summit's Scorecard of Victories

Sabah, Milliyet, Vatan, Aksam, and others: Mainstream Sabah's headline reads like a scorecard, "NATO: 2 - Bush: 1." The paper notes President Bush did not find support for his combat troop request for Afghanistan and the countries he supported for NATO membership, Ukraine and Georgia, were not accepted as members. However, President Bush gained NATO approval for the installation of a U.S.-led missile defense shield throughout Europe.

Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet writes under the headline, "A Threatening Wave Strikes the Summit," that "Bush made a call that smelled like a threat concerning more troops in Afghanistan" while Russian President Putin, "warned of a deep crisis if Ukraine and Georgia joined NATO," but that "Germany and France vetoed the new members." In addition, the paper notes, "Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria will join the NATO missile defense program against short-range missiles," but that "Putin is coming to the summit today and his response to the missile defense expansion is awaited with anxiety." Islamist-oriented Zaman writes about the German and French vetoes against the membership of Ukraine and Georgia in "Putin's Victory," that "in this case, Moscow used its energy power as a successful tool of foreign policy." Liberal Radikal calls the vetoes against Ukraine, Georgia, and Macedonia, a "Victory for Moscow and Athens," as "NATO took note of Russia's red line," and

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"Greek pressure prevented Macedonia's membership." Leftist Taraf writes, "Bush Didn't Get Anything He Wanted," as "in response to his demands for more troops in Afghanistan, only Paris and Prague agreed to support him," and "Ukraine, Georgia and Macedonia's memberships were blocked."

Europe Reacts to the AKP Closure Case

Mainstream Milliyet reports that co-chairman of the Turkey-EU joint parliamentary commission Joost Lagendijk spoke during a meeting regarding Turkey's EU accession negotiations. Lagendijk said, "The closure of the AKP should be prevented and the government should prepare an extensive reform package that prevents the closure of the political parties." EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn said, "the suit filed against the AKP was against the Venice Criteria because the relevant criteria justify party closure only if there is violence involved."

The PKK's Internal Turmoil

Milliyet, Zaman: Papers report turmoil within the highest ranks of the PKK. PKK leader Abdulkerim Ertas was killed recently during clashes with the Turkish military in the Bestler-Dereler region. According to reports based on wiretaps of PKK radio communications, PKK members are accusing leader Fehman Huseyin (code name Dr. Bahroz) for leading Ertas and PKK fighters into the deadly Bestler-Dereler clashes.

EDITORIAL OPINION: NATO

"Putin's NATO Victory"

Faruk Akkan wrote in Islamist-leaning Zaman (4/4): "By blocking Ukraine and Georgia's membership to NATO, Russian President Putin claimed an historic victory. He has worked hard to prevent NATO's extension toward the heart of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS); with this victory he also ensured Russian military presence in the Black Sea. All of this comes as a result of the Kremlin's long-term strategic planning, including its effective use of security and energy influence. Putin's trump card was the possibility of a hot conflict in the Caucasus region if NATO expanded toward Ukraine and Georgia; he used this as a threat to Europe's oil supply routes. A crisis in that region is the last thing NATO needs. Speculations continue regarding Putin's

concessions in exchange for blocking NATO's expansion. Russia may allow its territory to be used for Afghanistan operations; military bases in the CIS countries may also contribute. During the Bush-Putin summit, the two leaders are expected to sign a bilateral strategic agreement regarding short and mid term goals regarding this."

"Bush and Afghanistan"

Haluk Ulman wrote in business daily Dunya (4/4): "The NATO summit proves George Bush is focusing heavily on international issues before his presidential term comes to an end. Afghanistan appears to be the prime concern for the Bush administration. In fact, Afghanistan has become a benchmark for success for NATO in its fight against Al-Qaeda; developments in Afghanistan will shape the future of the Alliance. Therefore President Bush urged NATO members to be more engaged in the ongoing efforts by sending combat troops to Afghanistan. NATO will gain enormous credibility if NATO defeats the Taliban and Al-Qaeda; but also, Kabul's full authority must be reestablished throughout the country. Otherwise, NATO may lose its 'raison d'etre,' particularly in this post-Soviet Union era. If NATO loses the struggle with the Taliban, nobody will take the Alliance seriously. There is, however, no consensus among NATO members regarding the nature of commitment for Afghanistan. Bush pursued his 'use of force' policy in Iraq, which ended with a complete failure. Even NATO's Secretary General, in 2006, said, 'a military solution would not be the best option for Afghanistan. Afghanistan needs economic development, education and infrastructure.'"

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Final Court Ruling Against Saudi Businessman on the UN Terrorism Financiers List

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Cumhuriyet and Radikal report the final ruling by Turkey's Danistay (High Court of Appeals for Administrative Affairs) on the status of Saudi businessman Yasin al-Qadi's financial assets in Turkey. When his name was added to the UN's terrorism financiers list on September 28, 2001, al-Qadi's financial assets in Turkey were frozen. Following a series of appeals by al-Qadi's lawyers to overturn the ruling against him, the Danistay issued its final decision yesterday that his assets will remain frozen.

TV News:
NTV

Domestic News

The Court of Appeals sentenced former RP Chairman Necmettin Erbakan to 2 years and 4 months imprisonment, which will be served at home.

The last War of Independence veteran, Yakup Satar, passed away at the age of 109. His funeral ceremony was held in Eskisehir.

Turkish Cypriot President Talat warns that the suit seeking a ban against the AKP will have an impact on the Cyprus issue.

International News

Ledra Street in Nicosia/Lefkosa reopened for the first time in 44 years on Thursday. The street is a main shopping street in the capital of Cyprus that has symbolized the island's partition.

China banned imports of poultry products from Turkey in an effort to prevent the spread of bird flu.

A veteran activist who staged a solo protest last year against Myanmar's military junta has been sentenced to life in prison.

WILSON